

The five paragraph essay follows a defined format. The first paragraph introduces us to the thesis of the essay and directs us to the three main supporting subtopics. The second through fourth paragraphs are all similar in format. They individually restate the subtopics, and are developed by giving supporting information. The fifth and last paragraph restates the main thesis idea and reminds the reader of the three main supporting ideas that were developed. All of these paragraphs are important.

The introductory paragraph is the place in which the writer introduces the reader to the topic. It is important to make this a clear and limited statement. This is where the writer grabs the reader's attention. Because of its purpose, it is often the first sentence of the paragraph. It is followed by three subtopics that develop the thesis. Between this paragraph and all paragraphs of the essay, there needs to be some kind of a transition word, phrase, or sentence.

Next, the body of the essay contains paragraphs two through four. They are all similarly constructed. Their topic sentences are restatements, often in original form, of the three supporting ideas presented in the first paragraph. The subtopic of each of the body paragraphs is again supported by three or more supporting sentences. These cement, in the reader's mind, the relevancy and relationship of each of the subtopics to the thesis statement.

Finally, the fifth paragraph is the summary paragraph. It is important to restate the thesis and three supporting ideas in an original and powerful manner as this is the last chance the writer has to convince the reader of the validity of the information presented. Because the purposes of the first and fifth paragraph are so similar that some writers construct them at the same time. They will edit them, as necessary, as they do with each and every part of the essay.

It is important to reiterate that each of the paragraphs is joined together by a transition word, phrase or sentence. Transitions help the reader to follow the flow of the logic and sequencing. All of the essay types follow this basic transition format. However, there is more latitude with the narrative essay because of its nature.

To put it more visually, the structure model has been color coded and looks like this:

Introductory Paragraph

General Topic Sentence

Subtopic One

Subtopic Two

Subtopic Three

Transition

First Supporting Paragraph

Restate Subtopic One

First Supporting Detail or Example

Second Supporting Detail or Example

Third Supporting Detail or Example

Transition

Second Supporting Paragraph

Restate Subtopic Two

First Supporting Detail or Example

Second Supporting Detail or Example

Third Supporting Detail or Example

Transition

Third Supporting Paragraph

Restate Subtopic Three

First Supporting Detail or Example

Second Supporting Detail or Example

Third Supporting Detail or Example

Transition

Closing or Summary Paragraph

Synthesis of main topic

Synthesis of Subtopic One

Synthesis of Subtopic Two

Synthesis of Subtopic Three

There is more to understanding the structure than these simple basics. To find out more about the five paragraph essay, visit some of these sites:

- [The Five Paragraph Essay](#) - basic structure with an example
- [Writing an Effective Essay](#) - follow the basic steps

- [Essay Writing Tips](#) - simple yet effective
- [Writing Effective Paragraphs](#) - a good handout
- [Write the Introduction and Conclusion](#) - This site provides the basics and is a good place to begin. There is also a sample essay.
- [Writing an Effective Essay](#) - follow the basic steps
- [Find the Question](#) - Be sure you understand the assignment
- [The Five Paragraph Essay Slide Show](#) - all of the main points are covered in an interesting manner
- [The Five Paragraph Essay](#) - Here is a sample to show you how it all fits together.

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